COMPARISONS OF DISCREPANCY OF INTERPERSONAL NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION BETWEEN COUPLES INVOLVED IN A MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER GROUP AND COUPLES ENGAGED IN MARITAL THERAPY

by

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A dual thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

College of Nursing

The University of Utah

March 1985

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH GRADUATE SCHOOL

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I have read the thesis of [redacted] and [redacted] K. [redacted] in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent and acceptable; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the Supervisory Committee and is ready for submission to the Graduate School.

[redacted] 1985
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ABSTRACT

The major problem addressed in this study was the examination of differences between couples involved in a marriage encounter group and couples engaged in marital therapy. The focus was along the dimensions of discrepancy of interpersonal needs and perceptions of marital satisfaction. The tools used for this study were a demographic data sheet, a Likert scale of marital satisfaction, and the Marital Attitude Evaluation Scale (MATE).

Three hypotheses were developed to examine differences in perceived marital satisfaction and discrepancy of interpersonal needs between the two groups. The findings revealed that the couples in marital therapy displayed a higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs and a lower perception of marital satisfaction than did couples in the marriage enrichment program. The findings also suggest that certain independent variables obtained from the respondent's demographic data sheet also had an effect upon discrepancy of interpersonal needs and perceptions of marital satisfaction.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Beth Cole, Supervisory Committee Chairman, for her continued support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this research study. Appreciation is extended to both Dr. Thomas Aikins and Susan Cameron for sharing their expertise and assistance on this research project.

We wish to express our gratitude to the couples at the University of Utah's Counseling Center and the Salt Lake City Episcopal Marriage Encounter for their participation in this research. We would like to thank the staff at the Counseling Center, especially Gil Myers, for their assistance in collecting the data. We would also like to thank Tom and Alice Wilson, who granted us permission to utilize the Episcopal Marriage Encounter for our study.

Appreciation is extended to Daniel Cerro, from the University of Utah Computer Center, for sharing his expertise in statistics and for his assistance in analyzing the data.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to our families for their encouragement and support. Special thanks goes to Lucy Stempky, Shanni and Holli Welsh, and Jeffrey McCoy.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the prime institution of society for procreation and early care of the young, as well as for fulfillment of the emotional and security needs of the individual. With the increasing divorce rate, we need to find ways to understand how and why marriages do not fulfill their purposes. The field of marital therapy has been growing rapidly. The need to develop models for marital coping and marital therapy is especially urgent at the present time with the increase in the number of couples seeking such assistance.

The nature of nursing has been represented as being a helping discipline with a major focus on interpersonal interactions. It can be argued that the profession that possesses the theoretical knowledge about marital therapy is more likely to provide effective therapy. Because of the nature of nursing, it seems only natural that nurses take a strong interest in developing models for marital therapy. If a healthy marriage is viewed as a process rather than a state of being, then methods to examine the process need to be developed and tested. This thesis represents an attempt to add to nursing's theoretical base in the areas of defining healthy marriage and marital therapy.

CHAPTER I

INTERPERSONAL THEORY

A major goal of psychiatric nursing is the promotion and facilitation of healthy human relationships. The psychiatric nurse is concerned with the understanding and improvement of interpersonal relationships. Psychiatric nurses work with clients in the context of their social environment. Psychiatric nurses work with dysfunctional marital couples and families. Research in the area of functional and dysfunctional interpersonal patterns is important in furthering the knowledge base for assessing and planning treatment for couples and families in therapy.

Interpersonal relations have been used to explain personality structure and human behavior by many theorists over the past five decades. In the 1950s Harry Stack Sullivan emphasized the importance of social relationships in the study of human personality (Sullivan, 1953). He claimed that individuals interact with one another to obtain satisfaction and security and to alleviate the anxiety which blocks the achievement of these goals.

From Sullivan's work branched variations on the study of interpersonal relations and personality phenomena. Lewin's (1935) field theory of human behavior has been in the background of much of the thinking in the present theory of interpersonal relations. Heider (1958) theorized that, because interrelations are with another

person and not an object, the psychological world of the other person, as seen by the subject, must enter into the analysis. He postulates that a person reacts to what he thinks the other person is perceiving, feeling, thinking, in addition to what the other person may be doing.

Argyle (1982), in his book The Psychology of Interpersonal Behavior, theorizes that people are socially motivated because of specific drives: biological needs, dependency, affiliation, dominance, sex, aggression, self-esteem, and ego identity and motivations which include the need for achievement, money, and values. Argyle goes on to postulate that these drives are met only through interactional processes in which individuals utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication. Nonverbal elements, Argyle claims, communicate attitudes and emotions as well as supplementing verbal interchange.

Interpersonal Theory in Nursing

Interpersonal theory has been a part of nursing for many years. Florence Nightingale discussed therapeutic characteristics of relating to patients as early as the 1860s. Helena Willis Render, chief nurse and instructor in psychiatric nursing at the Psychiatric Hospital of the State University of Iowa, published a book titled Nurse-Patient Relationships in Psychiatry in 1947. Render's book focused on the importance of the nurse-patient interactions (Manfreda, 1982).

Peplau (1965) made interpersonal theory widely practiced and recognized as a nursing process. In her book, Interpersonal Relations in Nursing, Peplau abstracted from Sullivan's theory. Peplau viewed

the nurse, the patient, and others who were interacting as participant-observers. Peplau's book led to the development of a frame of reference that "enlightened nurses to the underlying theories, concepts, and practice of interpersonal nursing. It led to the development of interpersonal nursing as part of the core curriculum for nursing education" (Manfreda, 1982, p. 64).

Schutz's Interpersonal Theory

Most variations of interpersonal theory agree on two concepts: it is impossible for individuals not to communicate and interpersonal relationships exist to satisfy needs of the individual (Argyle, 1982; Haley, 1963; Harris, 1967; Heider, 1958; Schutz, 1960; Sullivan, 1953).

Schutz (1973) is another interpersonal theorist and it is his theory that provides the conceptual framework for this study. Schutz assumed that "every individual has three needs" (p. 414). He presents them in the following manner:

> Inclusion refers to feelings of being important or significant or worthwhile. Control refers to feelings of competence, including intelligence, appearance, practicality, and general ability to cope with the world. Affection revolves around feelings of being lovable, of feeling that if one's personal essence is revealed in its entirety it will be seen as a lovely thing. (p. 414)

Because Schutz assumed that all human interaction is categorized according to these three needs, he has behaviorally defined the interpersonal dimensions of each of them: "The interpersonal need for inclusion is the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people with respect to interaction and association" (p. 8).

Schutz (1973) claims that the need for inclusion varies on a

continuum from undersocial or oversocial and the core problem of inclusion can be expressed as "in" or "out." Personal identity, or the need to be recognized and accepted, is the key aspect of inclusion.

Schutz (1973) defines the need for control as: "The need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people with respect to control and power. Control behavior refers to the decision-making process between people" (p. 8).

The need for control varies on a continuum from the desire to control other people and have authority (autocratic) to the desire to be controlled and have someone else be responsible for one's life (abdicratic). The core problem of control can be expressed as "top or bottom," that is, whether or not a person is influenced by others or is the one to influence others in a relationship (Schutz, 1973).

The interpersonal need for affection is defined by Schutz as: "The need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with others with respect to love and affection" (p. 8). The need for affection varies on a continuum from underpersonal, with an avoidance of feeling involvement to the overpersonal. The core problem of affection can be expressed as "close" or "far" (Schutz, 1973).

Inclusion needs must be addressed when a relationship is being formed, and then continue to be addressed as the relationship grows and develops. Control and affection needs are generally manifested in relationships that have already been formed (Schutz, 1973).

Interpersonal Behavior in Dysfunctional Relations

It is possible to use Schutz's (1973) theory as a framework to look at specific types or categories of interpersonal relations, such as the marital dyad. Marriages often become dysfunctional because of conflicting levels of communication (Haley, 1963). Many marriages become dysfunctional because of the nonverbal or perhaps conflicting verbal content of the message.

Dysfunctional couples need to develop techniques for checking out what they are perceiving from each other. What some couples consider interpersonal communication is really consistent disqualification of messages. This serves the purpose of keeping real feelings covert and the marriage unthreatened (Luthman, 1974). The couple talks for each other and assumes they know what the other one is thinking or feeling without checking it out. They interrupt, change the subject, laugh, or cry inappropriately and cut off or deprecate each other in a hundred other devious and subtle ways. Other dysfunctional or negative communications include the double-bind technique of conveying messages. An example of this is the wife who acts cool and distant to her husband and then complains that he does not show her enough affection.

Harris (1967) claims marriages often become dysfunctional because the couple takes on complementary parent-child roles that satisfy neurotic interactions, whereas functional couples interact from a more effective level of adult to adult. Hof and Miller (1981), in their book Marriage Enrichment, emphasize the importance of interpersonal behavior in functional marriages in the areas of couple interaction

and communication, mutual acceptance, and support of emotional needs. Mace and Mace (1975) state that interpersonal communication is the basic structure of functional marriages. Satir (1967) agrees with Mace and Mace by claiming that interpersonal behavior and communication is the "life blood of all relationships" (p. 75).

Schutz (1960) claims that marriages become dysfunctional because of discrepancies that arise involving the couples' need to give and receive control, affection, and inclusion. Schutz postulates that often an individual desires certain behavior from others and yet displays behavior personally that camouflages or distorts needs. Because of the way one behaves towards others, behavior received from them may not be the behavior wanted.

Each partner in a marital dyad enters the relationship with a different pattern of interactional processes for satisfying interpersonal needs. The marriage can become dysfunctional if each partner cannot communicate needs effectively to the other and receive some satisfaction of those needs.

Purpose

The major problem of this study is to compare the level of need discrepancy and the perception of marital satisfaction between couples in marital therapy and couples involved in marriage encounter groups.

Marriage encounter groups are preventative in nature. They aim to prevent the emergence, development, or recurrence of interpersonal dysfunction (Guerney, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1975). Marriage

encounter groups focus on couples in marriages which are basically functional and strive to develop strengths and potentials of the dyad. Marriage encounter groups teach the couple how to recognize problems early and cope with change and conflict as well as enhancing interpersonal communication (Hof & Miller, 1981). On the other hand, couples in marital therapy present with a complaint of marital dysfunction. The results of research reveal that marital dysfunction usually occurs because of ineffective interpersonal communication (Harris, 1967; Locke, 1968; Mace & Mace, 1975; Schutz, 1960).

The focus of this study is to demonstrate that couples involved in marital therapy will show a higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs as well as a lower perception of marital satisfaction than couples who are not in therapy.

The results of this research would be useful to psychiatric nursing by providing a frame of reference as well as an interpersonal approach when dealing with couples in marital discord. If dysfunctional couples demonstrate a higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs and a lower perception of marital satisfaction than functional couples, the psychiatric nurse can incorporate this information into an effective treatment plan for therapy. The results of this study will also show evidence as to the effectiveness of specific tools designed to assess the quality of marital functioning.

Definition of Terms

Conceptual Definitions

Discrepancy of interpersonal needs. The disagreement that arises involving the couple's need to give and receive control, affection, and inclusion (Schutz, 1960) is termed discrepancy of interpersonal needs. It also refers to the disagreement between the behavior that each individual wants to receive from their mate and the behavior they display towards their mate.

Dysfunctional couple. A marital couple who perceives aspects of their marriage to be unsatisfactory and who are or have been engaged in counseling because of marital problems is termed a dysfunctional couple.

Functional couple. A marital couple who do not perceive their marriage unsatisfactorily and who are not in counseling because of marital conflicts is referred to as a functional couple.

Interpersonal behavior. Interpersonal behavior refers to relations which exist between people as opposed to relations in which one participant is inanimate (Schutz, 1960). It also refers to the specific actions, both verbal and nonverbal, performed by an individual when engaged in relations between one or more persons.

Marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction refers to the degree to which the desires of individuals comprising a marital dyad are fulfilled (Burr, 1973). Marital satisfaction focuses on the individual's perception of marriage.

Operational Definitions

Discrepancy of interpersonal needs. Discrepancy of interpersonal needs refers to the differences that arise involving the couple's need to give and receive control, affection, and inclusion as measured by the MATE-FIRO scale. The scores can be analyzed in two ways: (a) The scores can be analyzed according to the difference between the couple's need to give and receive control, affection, and inclusion; and (b) the scores can be analyzed according to the discrepancy between the individual needs of both mates in a marital dyad.

Dysfunctional couple. Marital couples who are currently involved in marital therapy and who have identified unresolved conflicts in the marriage are identified as dysfunctional couples. These couples were chosen from a university counseling center population.

Functional couple. Functional couple is defined as a marital couple who is presently engaged in a marriage enrichment program. Couples engaged in a local marriage encounter were used specifically in this study.

Interpersonal behavior. Interpersonal behavior refers to how individuals within a marital dyad relate to one another. It will be measured in this study through the use of the Marital Attitude Evaluation Scale (MATE) (Schutz, 1978). The MATE is a tool that compares what each mate wants in the marriage and what each mate believes their spouse wants.

Marital satisfaction. The degree to which the individuals in a marital dyad perceive their desires as being fulfilled is termed

marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1970) ranging from extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference between discrepancy of interpersonal need scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups.

2. There will be a significant difference between marital satisfaction scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups.

3. There will be a significant difference between discrepancy of interpersonal need scores and marital satisfaction scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many psychiatric nurses work with dysfunctional marital couples and families (Evans, 1971). Marital therapists and researchers agree on the critical importance of effective communication between husbands and wives for successful conflict resolution and, hence, for harmonious well-functioning marriages. The purpose of this study is to examine interpersonal patterns that exist in marital couples. A comparison of discrepancy of interpersonal needs and the perception of marital satisfaction will be made between functional and dysfunctional couples.

In a study by Beach and Arias (1983), a random sample of marital therapists rated poor communication as the most frequent and destructive problem presented by couples. They found that distressed and nondistressed couples have distinctly different patterns of communication. Distressed spouses are more fearful than nondistressed spouses of expressing feelings, and distressed spouses have difficulty interpreting each other's statements. Turkewitz and O'Leary (1981) have shown significant results of the therapeutic effects of communication skills training on marital satisfaction.

The following is a review of the literature which is pertinent to this topic. The relationship between interpersonal behavior and marital satisfaction will be examined first, followed by an examination

of the relationship between ineffective interpersonal patterns and dysfunctional marriages. The third section of the review will focus on marriage enrichment programs. Finally, a review of Schutz's (1978) contribution to this topic will be analyzed.

Marital Satisfaction and Interpersonal Behavior

Hawkins (1968) defines marital satisfaction as:

> . . . the subjective feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by a spouse when considering all current aspects of his marriage. This variable is conceived of as a continuum running from much satisfaction to much dissatisfaction. (p. 647)

As such, marital satisfaction focuses on the individual's perception of marriage.

A decade ago Burr (1973) postulated that spousal interaction had a positive impact on marital satisfaction. Since that time, the proposition has been empirically tested. Miller (1976) found a strong positive correlation between spousal interaction and marital satisfaction after controlling for background factors, such as children, social class, and length of marriage. Snyder (1979) found spousal interaction and time spent in joint activity to be one of the consistently highest correlates of marital satisfaction. Lewis and Spanier (1979) found, after intensive studies, that the greater the amount of quality time spent interacting, the greater the marital satisfaction. Overall, the correlation between marital satisfaction and the amount of quality interaction for spouses has been well established in the family literature.

These findings can be linked to the concept of interpersonal

theory. Interpersonal relations are defined as "relations which occur between people as opposed to relations in which one participant is "inanimate" (Schutz, 1960). Interpersonal relations consist of any verbal and nonverbal behavior which occurs between two or more people. It includes all the many ways that people interact with each other. Individuals who are involved in a close relationship often develop consistent, recurring interactional patterns. Some of these, such as consequences of love-making and support, are fulfilling to the partners and functional to the relationship. Other patterns, such as sequences of conflict, are distressing and dysfunctional (Sullaway & Christensen, 1983).

Interactional patterns can be symmetrical or asymmetrical (Sullaway & Christensen, 1983). Symmetrical patterns are repetitious communication sequences between a couple in which members of a couple take different, mutually complementary roles in the interaction. An example would be one member taking the role of "blamer" and the other member taking the role of "placator" and "calmer." Sullaway and Christensen (1983) found a significant relationship between couples' satisfaction in their relationship and the occurrence of specific asymmetrical interaction patterns.

Marriage is defined by Karlsson (1963) as "a process of interaction." The basic events in such a process, the units in a theory of interaction, are acts or behaviors of individuals. Therefore, interpersonal behavior can be defined as any act or behavior which transpires between two or more people. Interpersonal behaviors which commonly occur between marital couples and affect marital satisfaction

include communication and self-disclosure, adjustments in interaction to such issues as role discrepancy and time spent together in joint activities.

Narvan (1967) found that couples who perceive their marriages to be satisfactory talk more with each other, convey the feeling that they understand what is being said to them, preserve communication channels and keep them open, show more sensitivity to each other's feelings, and make more use of supplementary nonverbal techniques of communication.

Karlsson (1963) claims that marital satisfaction depends on effective communication of three aspects. The first two involve communicating love and emotions and respect and admiration (giving status). The third is communication role expectations so that the spouses are informed about the size and direction of the adjustment they are required to make. "Communication of role expectations is a necessary prerequisite for adjustment" (Karlsson, 1963, p. 37). Burr (1973) also proposes that the number of role discrepancies in the marital relationship influence marital satisfaction.

Other studies reveal that there is a greater reciprocity of positive exchanges in nondistressed couples than in distressed couples. This is to say that positive responses of one partner bring positive responses of the other partner (Davidson, Balswick, & Halverson, 1983; Gottman, 1979; Rettig & Bubol, 1983).

Levinger and Senn (1967) and Morgensen and Gaudy (1980) have found a linear relationship between spousal self-disclosure and marital satisfaction. Research has revealed that the more self-disclosure

partners receive (or perceive they receive) from their spouses, the greater the reported marital satisfaction.

Davidson et al. (1983) found that husbands' and wives' perceptions concerning the balance of affective self-disclosure exchange to be most strongly related to marital satisfaction. They found that when individuals are involved in inequitable relationships concerning self-disclosure, one way to compensate is to overestimate or underestimate the other spouse's contribution. Partners who perceive their self-disclosure as equal indicated better adjustment in their marriages than partners who perceive discrepancies.

Beach and Arias (1983) attempted to differentiate functional from dysfunctional couples by calculating perceptual discrepancy scores for each spouse's communication ability. They found that individuals in dysfunctional marriages tended to report that they were just as poor at communicating as their spouses said they were. The reverse of these perceptions were found in functional marriages. These findings suggest that positive distortion may be a healthy and useful aspect of functional marriages.

Three decades ago Locke (1968) carried out extensive studies on marital satisfaction and found that continuous communication is apparently necessary for the maintenance of emotional attachment. Locke refers primarily to less face-to-face communication resulting from the husband and wife having different work schedules or participating in most outside activities without the other.

Locke (1968) defines sympathetic understanding as "the ability to share the feelings, activities, and values of another to

such an extent that one reacts to these from the viewpoint of the other" (p. 249). Locke found the presence of sympathetic understanding to be present much more often in couples who perceive their marriages as satisfactory and almost completely absent in couples who perceive their marriages to be unsatisfactory. Locke (1968) also found that happily married couples talk things over together much more frequently than dysfunctional couples.

There is evidence that couples with higher marital satisfaction scores claim to be better at reading their spouse's nonverbal behavior than do couples with lower marital satisfaction scores (Narvan, 1967). There is also some evidence that they are, in fact, better at this task. A study by Kahn (1970) showed that dissatisfied husbands consistently distorted their wives' messages. They attributed "negative connotations to their wife's attempts to communicate affection, happiness, and playfulness" (p. 455). Apparently couples in satisfied marriages have a nonverbal signal-response system that is relatively free of this kind of distortion.

Locke (1968) also found that happily married couples communicate with each other by glances and inflections which had a particular meaning to them. Communication was as much by tone of voice and manner of speaking as by the words which were spoken.

Rettig and Bubol (1983) and Lewis and Spanier (1979) have shown that marital satisfaction is increased with the increased frequency of shared time together. This increases the probability of exchanging interpersonal resources, such as love, respect, information, and personal services. It is also more likely to create a supportive

emotional climate and generate positive feelings.

A very strong link between marital satisfaction and interpersonal behavior is presented in the literature. A study by White (1983) questioned whether interpersonal behavior affected marital satisfaction or vice versa. White's results demonstrate statistically significant positive paths from interaction to marital satisfaction and from marital satisfaction to interaction. However, the traditionally posited path from interaction to mutual satisfaction was shown to be weaker than the reciprocal path.

Interpersonal Behavior in Dysfunctional Couples

There are several aspects of interpersonal behavior patterns that are associated with marital dysfunction. Glasser and Glasser (1970) claim that functional couples can be characterized by reliance upon reciprocal relationships. Each partner has learned that if one positively reinforces the other, one will be compensated in the same magnitude. In contrast, the partners in dysfunctional marriages seek to minimize individual costs as they have little hope of receiving compensatory rewards. Glasser and Glasser (1970) postulate that two interpersonal patterns are available to these latter couples. First, the partners may retreat entirely into patterns of withdrawal. Second, the partners may rely heavily upon the use of negative reinforcement.

Gottman (1979) found that couples who are not satisfied with their marriage and who engage in negative reciprocity (meeting negative behavior with negative behavior) exhibit the following

behaviors: "(a) maintain interpersonal distance, (b) do not develop a private message system, and (c) are not as effective at reading their partner's nonverbal behavior" (p. 236).

Even though the members of a couple join in a relationship because of actual and expected reinforcement that can be obtained from their interaction, differences in needs and desires inevitably arise. If partners lack the skills to negotiate these differences in positive ways, one or the other may resort to coercive efforts. They may engage in aversive behavior (e.g., nagging, threats, guilt induction) until the partner complies with the other's wish (Patterson & Reed, 1970). The coercive one becomes positively reinforced for the effort while the other is negatively reinforced (cessation of the aversive behavior).

Weiss and Margolin (1977) also found that distressed relationships may be characterized by patterns of dysfunctional interaction and communication. Furthermore, their research has revealed that the most important aspects of marital interaction are not the results of the interaction (e.g., who wins the most decisions), but rather the structure and flow of the interaction itself.

Most members in dysfunctional marriages complain of a lack of communication. At face value, this complaint would seem to have validity as research has shown that silence is far more prevalent in disordered as compared to "normal" couples (Ferrerra & Winter, 1968). Glasser and Glasser (1970) suggest that this complaint merely masks a persistent tendency to engage in negative behavior. It would be reasonable to conclude that while dysfunctional couples may experience

the same frequency of communication as functional couples, their communication is more confined to a negative pattern of communication.

Luthman and Kirschenbaum (1974) have found that double messages, both verbal and nonverbal, are the most common cause of breakdown in communication in couples. This is to say that the verbal message conveys one meaning and the nonverbal message something else. An example of this is the husband who verbally claims he is not angry but nonverbally appears tense and distant.

Another type of interpersonal behavior common to dysfunctional couples are games. Berne (1964) talks about game-playing as a non-productive attempt at solving problems. They claim that "whether the game is 'martyr,' 'poor me,' or 'stupid,' the interaction played out leaves the problem unsolved" (p. 191).

Conflict resolution is another example of interpersonal behavior that is aligned with dysfunctional marriages. Studies conclude that conflicts are equally present in successfully functioning marriages as well as in dysfunctional marriages (Mudd, Mitchell, & Taugin, 1965). Although all marriages or relationships have problems, the successful ones have partners who learn how to negotiate conflicts (Galvin & Brommel, 1982).

Raush, Barry, Hertel, and Swain (1974) claim that couples acquire a set of conflictual behaviors which characterize them. He found similar responses to be one of the major determinants of interaction. In other words, certain conflictual behaviors of one partner were more likely to elicit similar responses from the other partner. This is another example of negative reciprocity.

Rosenblatt, Titus, and Cunningham (1979) found that when one or both partners used disrespect, coercion, and abrasive factors in their communication, conflicts escalated and the couples spent less time together. Galvin and Brommel (1982) found that dysfunctional couples display more covert or hidden conflict than do functional couples. They claim that these former couples frequently used communication strategies which include denial, disqualification of anger, displacement, disengagement, and pseudomutuality. This last strategy involves both partners pretending to be happy and not allowing any signs of discord to enter the picture.

Locke (1968) found that conflicts arise over discrepancies in needs and preferences (e.g., drinking, reading, sports, parties, child rearing, and church going). Locke found that democratic relationships, as measured by reported equality in taking the lead, was decidedly more prevalent among satisfied couples than couples seeking divorce.

A study by Karlsson (1963) found that one dominant and one submissive spouse or two egalitarian spouses make for good adjustment. Two dominant or two submissive spouses usually lead to marital dysfunction. Some researchers have evidence that functional couples are egalitarian (Haley, 1964; Murrell, 1971). Other investigators have found evidence that functional couples display a clear power hierarchy (Beavers, Lewis, & Timberlawn, 1976; Schuham, 1972). Jacob (1975), in his review of couples' interaction, concluded that "couples' power structures are more often differentiated [hierarchical] in functional than dysfunctional couples" (p. 51).

In the area of marital interaction, the predominant sociological view is that well-functioning marriages are egalitarian rather than characterized by a fixed dominant pattern (Bakeman & Dabbs, 1976). This is consistent with social learning theories that view dominance as an example of coercive control (Patterson & Reid, 1970). Communication theorists, such as Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967), agree by suggesting that symmetrical relationships were less dysfunctional than complementary relationships.

A study by Argyle and Furnham (1983) concluded that marital satisfaction involves conflict and the closer the relationship, the more there is of both. The relative amount of conflict is greater in those relationships that are less voluntary (more structured) and where one partner has less power.

As early as 1955, Foote and Cottrell developed the concept of interpersonal competence, a phenomenon important for marriage and family life. By this they refer to the acquired ability to interact with other people effectively, according to some criterion which is not necessarily the satisfaction of the individuals. These authors define interpersonal competence as being composed of health, intelligence, empathy, autonomy, judgment, and creativity. They claim these constituent parts are important for the quality of interaction. A study conducted by these authors suggests that, without interpersonal competence, marital couples did not perceive their marriages as satisfactory.

It has also been shown that the interaction of distressed couples will show more asymmetry in predictability than will the

behavior of nondistressed couples. This means that distressed couples are less able to predict the actions, wishes, or needs of their mate. This asymmetry of predictability has been found to be in itself a type of patterning in interaction of distressed couples (Gottman, 1979). Karlsson (1963) also suggests that in order to perform the marital interaction effectively, it is necessary for the spouses to be able to predict what the other will do next. Such predictions, he claims, require communication of intentions.

Using self-rating scores, Locke (1968) found that dysfunctional couples are more indifferent toward participating in activities with their spouses than were functional couples. He concluded that spouses who participate frequently in individualistic behavior were significantly more dysfunctional than couples who engage in activities together.

Very often dysfunctional couples will turn to marital therapy to help negotiate problems. Luthman and Kirschenbaum (1974) claim that dysfunctional couples (those whose processes for solving their problems have failed) come to counseling to learn new problem-solving techniques. Luthman and Kirschenbaum say dysfunctional couples need to develop techniques for verifying what they are perceiving from each other.

Most couples seeking marital therapy do so only after their conflicts have become so exacerbated that the relationship has suffered severe damage. Hostilities and resentments are often high and the motivation to overcome the problem has often diminished in one or both of the partners. The trouble has often been developing over a

long period of time and is well established in the marriage by the time the couple seeks help. The couple often seeks help primarily as a recovery mission rather than as a means of promoting growth. Their goal is often for the therapist to return them to the status quo rather than enrichment of their relationship (Mace & Mace, 1975).

Marriage Enrichment

The marriage enrichment movement has emerged in response to the serious problems facing marriages today. Marriage enrichment is an educational and preventative approach to relationship enhancement. The term refers to the philosophy and process of this approach as well as to a great variety of programs. The aim of enrichment is to assist couples in achieving the following goals:

1. To increase each partner's self-awareness of both self and partner, especially regarding the positive aspects, strengths, and growth potential of the individual and the marriage
2. To increase exploration and self-disclosure of the partner's thoughts and feelings
3. To increase mutual empathy and intimacy
4. To develop and encourage the use of skills needed by the partners for effective communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution (Hof & Miller, 1981).

The preventative nature of marriage enrichment is based on the goal of preventing the emergence, development, or recurrence of interpersonal dysfunction (Guerney, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1975; Otto, 1976). It is believed that by dealing with marriages which are basically

functional and by developing the potential and strengths that are there, growth and satisfaction can occur. As a positive, growth-oriented base develops, deterioration in the relationship can be halted or prevented. The couples can learn how to recognize problems early and also how to cope with change and conflict. Along with the preventative emphasis, there is primary emphasis on increasing emotional and interpersonal satisfaction and on strengthening marriage and family life (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Otto (1976) defines marriage enrichment in terms of "development of marriage and individual potential while maintaining a consistent and primary focus on the relationship of the couple" (p. 14). Otto's definition indicates the balance that most marriage enrichment programs try to provide between relational and marital growth on the one hand and individual growth on the other.

The marriage enrichment movement has emerged from a variety of sources. The Roman Catholic Marriage Encounter program began in Spain in 1962. It grew out of the desire to help families relate more effectively together. The program reached the United States in 1967, and a study by Genovese (1975) showed over 200,000 couples had participated by 1975. Because of the strong links with the Roman Catholic Church, some perceived a sense of exclusivism and different versions sprang up. Otto was conducting a variety of experimental programs in the area of marital enrichment as early as 1961. In 1973, the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) was founded by Mace and Mace (1975). There are now at least 50 different programs, some of which have been attended by 10 couples, while others have been

attended by thousands.

All enrichment programs employ similar methods. These include communication skills training (dialoguing), responsible confrontation, self-disclosure, focusing on positive aspects of the marriage, and some forms of behavioral modification (Hof & Miller, 1981; Mace & Mace, 1975; Schutz, 1973).

The process of marriage enrichment is an ongoing one and not restricted to participation in weekend experiences or time-limited groups. This emphasis on the ongoing process of marriage enrichment reflects the idea that established and entrenched patterns of marital interaction do not change overnight or by participation in one program. It is believed that the couples must make a commitment to work at enhancing the relationship continually (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Because the marital enrichment movement is fairly new, some question the durability of a lasting positive change in couples who have participated. There is evidence that at follow-up, participants in enrichment programs maintain the gains reported (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977).

Burns (1972) reported maintenance of changes in self-perception and perception of spouses in marriage encounter groups from posttest to follow-up. Wieman (1973) found that changes in marital adjustment, expressive and responsive skills, and specific target behaviors were stable over a 10-week follow-up period. In addition, Dillon (1975) obtained significant changes in self-reported communication, self-esteem, and marital satisfaction that were maintained over 10 weeks. Nadeau (1971) and Swicegood (1974) also reported some stability in

changes following marital enrichment experiences.

Kilmann, Moreault, and Robinson (1978) found that some changes (e.g., self-awareness and positive self-esteem) were maintained at follow-up while others were not (e.g., self-disclosure). Although the results of follow-up are for the most part encouraging, more studies need to be done with follow-up measures before a conclusion can be reached that marital enrichment does lead to stable, positive changes in relationships.

Boufford (1976) videotaped couples before, during, and after participation in a marriage enrichment program, along with a 4-week follow-up, and concluded that marital communication and adjustment are closely related and that a change in one appears to bring about a change in the other. Gruber (1974) studied couples who participated in a 6-month enrichment program and found that one could not establish any significant relationship between self-concept and marital adjustment. He did find positive gains in marital communication and marital adjustment.

Marital relationships have been shown to be enhanced by self-disclosure and marital satisfaction. White (1983) found that couples could be taught to disclose themselves more fully to one another but that such disclosure did not necessarily improve satisfaction in their marital relationship.

Samko (1978) studied self-disclosure and marital communication in couples who had participated in a marriage encounter weekend. Samko found that husbands as well as wives had significantly higher levels of self-disclosure and primary communication right after the weekend

and also at a 6-week follow-up. Samko concluded that both the encounter and the "dialogue" techniques were significant variables affecting both self-disclosure and primary communication.

Troost (1976) researched the communication variable in couples participating in a marriage enrichment program. Troost's results indicate that both behavioral and self-report measures of self-disclosure are positively associated with self-report of marital satisfaction, expectation for the future, and joint activities of the couple.

Wittrup (1973) looked at how couples involved in a marriage enrichment program settled conflicts and set goals after pretesting and posttesting. Wittrup concluded that enrichment programs are effective in developing marital roles, marital communication, and ability to solve conflicts.

In summary, marital enrichment programs show a positive correlation with self-disclosure, communication ability, conflict resolution, and marital adjustment. However, more studies are needed to positively confirm these findings.

William C. Schutz

In order for a relationship to be mutually satisfying, the persons involved in it must resolve the issues that Schutz terms inclusion, control, and affection in ways they find appropriate and meaningful. In individuals and relationships these needs have differing levels of intensity and urgency at different points in time. Any resolution of these issues needs to be viewed as immediate, dynamic,

and subject to change rather than rigid and inflexible.

Schutz (1973) claims that each individual must develop an appropriate and satisfying balance in his life with regard to the needs of inclusion, control, and affection. To do this effectively within the context of a marital relationship requires self-awareness and self-esteem as well as awareness of and esteem for the other person in the relationship. Differences between one's own needs and desires, as well as differences between partners, leads to inevitable internal and interpersonal conflicts. These differences need to be addressed openly and directly in order for satisfying dynamic solutions to be achieved. In order for them to occur, individuals and couples must be encouraged to explore all three of these areas of interpersonal needs. They also need to be encouraged to acquire skills that will facilitate the development of an appropriate and satisfying balance and, through that balance, a fulfilling marital relationship.

Little research has been done applying Schutz's theory specifically to couples. Several studies have been directed toward the analysis of interpersonal behavior in groups and demonstrate that inclusion, control, and affection emerge as the three primary types of behavior.

For example, Leary (1957) analyzed interpersonal behavior based on an examination of interview protocols, test records, and group therapy meetings. Leary arrived at three concepts: dominance-submission, affiliation-hostility, and intensity of each behavior. The first two classifications related to Schutz's affection and

control areas.

Leary (1957) described affiliation-hostility in terms of "affectionate, friendly, warm, approving, unfriendly, hostile, irritable, critical . . ." (p. 36). Leary described dominance-submission as "autocratic, bossy, dictatorial, leading; weak, submissive, spineless, meek, obedient . . ." (p. 36). Leary rates each interpersonal mechanism on a 3-point scale. A consistent rating of 3 would correspond to what Schutz (1960) calls oversocial or autocratic, and a rating of 1 would point toward Schutz's definition of undersocial or abdicratic. Swanson (1951) devised a way of coding and scoring a large number of interpersonal behaviors. Swanson proposed that there are perhaps only three distinguishable types of group behavior. Corresponding respectively to Schutz's (1960) inclusion, control, and affection factors are Swanson's (1951) measures of participation, influence, and liking received.

A study by Carter (1955) focused on the behavioral characteristics which can be evaluated by observing people interacting. Carter came up with three factors that significantly correspond to Schutz's (1960) three interpersonal needs. The first factor, "individual prominence," involves the need to be noticed and recognized. This correlates with Schutz's definition of inclusion. Carter's second factor was "group goal facilitation." This involves behavior in achieving the group goal, including cooperation, adaptability, and efficiency. It may correspond to the control area defined by Schutz (1960). The extreme behaviors of "group goal facilitation" include the autocrat or abdicrat. The democrat would facilitate group goals. Carter's

third factor, "group sociability," corresponds to Schutz's (1960) affection area in that it includes traits which the individual displays in striving for or against group acceptance and adaptability.

Jenkins and Lippitt (1966) analyzed questionnaire data of children, their parents, and teachers and found three themes as being predominant in between-group relations. These are "social, power, and friendliness." These three kinds of interpersonal relations correspond to inclusion, control, and affection.

Schutz (1960) designed the FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation) Awareness Scales to test his theory. The FIRO Scales measure the behavior that the respondents express toward other people and the behavior that they want other people to express toward them in the areas of inclusion, control, and affection. The FIRO Scales are the product of a long evolution. The test originated in Washington, D.C. at the Naval Research Laboratory in 1952. Schutz (1960) presented himself with the task of constructing a test adequate for composing productive groups. Since that time, several variations of the FIRO Scale have been developed to measure specific aspects of personality. For example, the FIRO-B measures perception of interpersonal behavior, whereas the FIRO-F measures feelings. The underlying purpose for all the FIRO Scales is to construct a measure of how an individual perceives actions in interpersonal situations and to construct a measure that will lead to the prediction of interaction between people based on data from the measuring instrument alone.

The MATE (Marital Attitude Evaluation) is another variation of the FIRO Scales. It is used to measure how two people in a close,

interpersonal relationship feel and behave toward each other. There has been little research on the FIRO-MATE. A study by Everaerd and Dekker (1981) utilized the MATE to evaluate marital satisfaction in couples who complained of sexual dysfunction. Several studies have been documented using the FIRO-B scale to determine personality structure of couples in which the wife is employed and of couples in which the wife is the homemaker.

Burke and Weir (1975) found that working wives wanted less inclusion, control, and affection than did nonworking wives. However, the working wives expressed a stronger need to control than did nonworking wives. Husbands of working wives also had lower scores on expressed inclusion and control and wanted inclusion and affection. The husbands of working wives showed a stronger desire to be controlled than the husbands of nonworking wives. In summary, two-career family members preferred significantly less interpersonal exchange than did one-career family members.

Exline, Gary, and Schuette (1965) used the FIRO-B to test how interpersonal orientations correlate with subjects' willingness to exchange glances with an inerviewer. Exline et al. found that women scored higher on wanted and expressed affection than did men. They concluded that "sex differences in eye contact are a result of women's greater orientation toward affectionate and inclusive relationships with others" (p. 208).

Morval and Morval (1972) used the FIRO-B scale to investigate self-esteem in adolescent girls and found a positive correlation between self-esteem and the need for inclusion in social groups and a

negative correlation between self-esteem and the need to control others.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The present study was a descriptive research study in which variables between two samples were compared. The major problem addressed in this study was to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between marital couples engaged in marriage encounter and couples seeking marital therapy. Measurements were made along the dimensions of marital satisfaction and discrepancy of needs.

Sample

The subjects were selected from a population of clients being treated in a mental health clinic (the therapy group), and a population engaged in a marriage encounter group (the encounter group).

The therapy group was selected from the university counseling center. The counseling center's services are available to students, faculty, and staff of the university along with their families. Marriage, family, and premarital counseling are offered for couples, parents, families, and individuals with the focus on developing more effective communication patterns and/or solving problems related to family living.

The therapy group consisted of 15 married couples receiving marital therapy. The couples met the following criteria: (a) the

couple had not previously been involved in marital therapy; and (b) the couple had previously attended no more than four therapy sessions.

The encounter group was selected from couples engaged in a Salt Lake City marital enrichment program. They were self-selected by means of personal invitation from friends and encouragement from the program's sponsor. Advertising for the encounter group was also posted in the community, at various locations, inviting the public to attend. These couples were considered to have good marriages, but still wanted to enhance their marital relationship.

As in many marriage enrichment programs, the areas of communication, conflict resolution, negotiation, and self-awareness were considered and discussed. The enrichment program combined many educational procedures, such as lectures, discussions, modeling, group participation, and individual couple interaction to practice those skills taught. Special care was taken to maintain the privacy of each couple.

The marriage encounter group consisted of 25 couples who met the following criteria: (a) each couple had participated in at least one marriage encounter experience; and (b) the couple had not previously or were not currently receiving marital therapy.

Background data collected on all 40 couples included: (a) age, (b) occupation, (c) annual income, (d) level of education, (e) religious denominations, (f) frequency of participation in church activities, (g) number of years or months in present marriage, (h) number of children, (i) ages of children, and (j) previous

participation in marital counseling. Refer to Table 1 for a summary of the demographic data.

Description of the Subjects

Based on the background data provided by the 15 couples in the therapy group, the following description of the subjects was obtained. The wives listed their religious preference as follows: 2, Catholic; 6, Latter-day Saints; 0, Protestant; 2, no affiliation; and 6, no response. The husbands listed their religious denomination as follows: 1, Catholic; 9, Latter-day Saints; 2, Protestant; 1, no affiliation; and 3, no response. Frequency distributions were calculated for both of the spouses' church attendance, occupation, and extent of formal education. All 30 individuals had completed high school and 50% had completed 4 years of college. The average number of years married was 6.4 years and ranged from 6 months to 22 years. The average number of children was 1.4 ranging from 0-5. Seven couples listed an annual income greater than $25,000; 4 couples listed an income between $15,000 and $25,000; 3 couples were between $10,000 and $14,000; and 2 couples' income were reported to be below $10,000.

The marriage encounter group consisted of 25 couples. The wives listed their religious preference as follows: 0, Catholic; 10, Latter-day Saints; 9, Protestant; 1, no affiliation; and 5, no response. The husbands listed their religious preference as follows: 2, Catholic; 6, Latter-day Saints; 8, Protestant; 4, no affiliation; and 5, no response. Frequency distributions were calculated for

Table 1

Demographic Data

	Therapy group		Encounter group	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	29.17	6.71	33.10	9.28
Annual income[a]	2.93	1.08	3.50	0.81
Education	15.10	1.83	14.76	2.19
Number of years married	6.38	6.08	9.58	7.76
Number of children	1.40	1.43	2.20	1.40

[a]Annual income was represented as follows: 1 = less than $10,000; 2 = $10,000-$14,000; 3 = $15,000=$25,000; 4 = greater than $25,000.

church service attendance, occupation, and extent of formal education. Of the 50 participants, only 2 individuals had not completed at least 1 year of posthigh school education. The average number of years married was 9.6 years, ranging from 3 months to 36 years. The average number of children was 2.2 with a range from 0-6. Fifteen couples listed a combined average annual income greater than $25,000; 6 couples listed an annual income between $15,000 and $25,000; 2 couples between $10,000 and $14,000; and only 1 couple reported an annual income below $10,000 per year.

Measurement Tools

Three questionnaires were used in this study.

Demographic Data Form

The Demographic Data Form was used to obtain background information from the subjects. An example of the data sheet can be found in the Appendix.

Marriage Satisfaction Scale

The Marriage Satisfaction Scale is a Likert scale used for assessing perceived marital satisfaction. A Likert scale consists of several declarative statements which express a viewpoint on a topic. Respondents are asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the opinion expressed. In this case, respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction with their marital relationship on a scale from 1 (representing extreme dissatisfaction) to 5 (representing positive satisfaction). The same question regarding perceived marital satisfaction was phrased in three different ways so as to increase reliability.

Marital Attitudes Evaluation (MATE)

The MATE questionnaire (Schutz, 1978) is a 90-item, self-report instrument. The MATE was designed by Schutz in 1977 to explore the relationship between two people who have close contact with each other. The test attempts to provide a measure of a person's characteristic behavior toward the spouse in the three areas of interpersonal need: inclusion, control, and affection. It is designed to measure compatability of the marital pair by assessing both the desired behavior from the spouse and the perceived dissatisfaction of the spouse with the respondent's behavior.

The items in the MATE measure scales derived from the FIRO theory originally presented in FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (Schutz, 1960). This theory presents a series of hypotheses based on the fundamental interpersonal dimension of Inclusion (I), Control (C), and Affection (A). They are defined behaviorally by Schutz (1978) as follows:

> INCLUSION: The interpersonal need for inclusion is the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people with respect to interaction and association. Some terms that connote various aspects of a relationship that is primarily positive inclusion are "associate, interact, mingle, communicate, belong, companion, comrade, attend to, member, togetherness, join, extravert, pay attention to, interested, encounter." Negative inclusion is connoted by "exclude, isolate, outsider, outcast, lonely, detached, withdrawn, abandon, ignore."
>
> CONTROL: The interpersonal need for control is the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people with respect to control and power. Control behavior refers to the decision-making process between people. Some terms that connote aspects of primarily positive control are "power, authority, dominance, influence, control, ruler, superior, officer, leader." Aspects of negative control are connoted by "rebellion, resistance, follower, anarchy, submissive, henpecked, milquetoast."
>
> AFFECTION: The interpersonal need for affection is the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with others with respect to love and affection. Some terms that connote aspects of primarily positive affection are "love, like, emotionally close, personal, intimate, friend, sweetheart." Aspects of negative affection are connoted by "hate, cool, dislike, emotionally distant, rejecting." (p. 8)

The items in the MATE measure scales derived from the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) theory. Each of the two parts of the MATE consists of five scales, each scale defined by nine items which were devised with the aid of the Guttman scaling technique.

> The basic notion of the Guttman or cumulative scale is that an internal relationship exists among the items forming

> the scale such that a person who endorses or agrees with an item of a given scale position will endorse all items below it in the scale. (Summers, 1970, p. 204)

Guttman (1950) utilized the coefficient of reproducibility as a method of estimating the degree of internal consistency. Guttman suggests that the lower limit of a satisfactory coefficient of scalability will lie somewhere between .60 and .65.

To assess the mean, standard deviation, and reproducibility for the MATE scales, Schutz (1978) administered the questionnaire to 113 white married couples. Inspection of the correlation among MATE scales revealed that, for about one-fourth of the married respondents tested, all areas of their relationship with each other were satisfactory and for about one-fourth no areas were satisfactory. The remaining 50% of respondents have a pattern of satisfaction that varies depending on the interpersonal areas. Reproducibility scores are the coefficients of internal consistency for the MATE. Reproducibility has been proven to be 94% (Schutz, 1978). Content validity is a property of all legitimate cumulative Guttman scales (Summers, 1970, p. 210) Because the FIRO scales are a type of Guttman scale, the MATE can be presumed to have content validity.

The name of each MATE scale is given in Table 2. The size of the score indicates the degree of agreement with the scale name. When 2 spouses take the MATE, their scores on the individual scales are compared. A high score indicates a discrepancy of needs between the couple, whereas a low score indicates that needs are being met.

Interpretation of the MATE is as follows:

Table 2

MATE Scale Names

	Part I	Part II
	I want you to . . .	I feel that you want me to . . .
Inclusion behavior (Ib)	. . . spend more time with me and give me more attention.	. . . spend more time with you and give more attention.
Inclusion feelings (If)	. . . be more interested in me and feel more strongly that I am a significant person.	. . . be more interested in you and feel more strongly that you are a significant person.
Control behavior (Cb)	. . . allow me more freedom and allow me to think more for myself.	. . . allow you more freedom and allow you to think more for yourself.
Control feelings (Cf)	. . . have more respect for my ability to think and to do things well.	. . . have more respect for your ability to think and to do things well.
Affection (A)	. . . show and feel more love and affection for me.	. . . show and feel more love and affection for me.

1. Scores on Part I indicate "my" (the respondent's) desires from "you" (respondent's mate) on the scales listed. A high score indicates high acceptance of the statement defining the scale; a low score indicates rejection of that statement. Each person has give scores corresponding to the five scales.

2. Scores on Part II indicate how "I" perceive "your" dissatisfaction with me. Again high score indicates acceptance of scale name.

3. Comparison may be made between how I perceive your dissatisfactions with me (my Part II) and how you state these dissatisfactions (your Part I). The same score on my Part II and on your Part I indicates that I perceive you accurately. If your score is higher, you are more dissatisfied with me than I think you are. If you score lower, that means that I feel that you are more dissatisfied with me than you are. A similar comparison may be made in the other direction (my Part I and your Part II).

4. Comparison may be made between my dissatisfaction with you (my Part I) and my perception of your dissatisfaction with me (my Part II). This may be examined for evidence of projection. If, for example, the following scores obtain:

Your response: I want you to show me more affection. Your score: A(I) = 2. My response: I want you to show more affection for me. My score: A(I) = 9. My response: You want me to show more affection for you. My score: A(II) = 8.

One reason I misperceive you (8 vs. 2) is that I may be projecting onto you my own feelings (9).

5. MATE has been used very effectively as an opening for exploring a relationship; it helps to pinpoint areas of difficulty. Whether or not the exact scores are useful, discussion of the theoretical areas underlying the test usually helps to get to the core of the interpersonal relation. (Schutz, 1978, p. 9)

Method of Data Collection

The researchers requested permission for the data collection from a university counseling center and a Salt Lake City marriage enrichment program. Permission was obtained in writing.

The study was explained to participants in the marriage enrichment program at the wrap-up meeting following a weekend marriage encounter. If they agreed to participate, they were asked to sign a consent form. Then they were asked to fill out the two

questionnaires along with the demographic sheet with anonymity guaranteed.

The study was explained to the administrative, secretarial, and clinical staff at the university counseling center. The staff was instructed about criteria to be met by the subjects in the counseling population. Therapists chose couples from their caseload who met the criteria and who volunteered to participate. Clients who agreed were given the consent form, two questionnaires, and the demographic data sheet. An example of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The University of Utah Computer Center's (UU/CC) Univac 1100 was used for the analysis of the data. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975).

The major problem of this study was to determine whether statistically significant differences existed on the dimensions of marital satisfaction and discrepancy of interpersonal needs between couples involved in marriage encounter groups and couples seeking marital counseling.

T tests were applied to the scores of the two groups to determine the significant differences between the two groups. F tests were computed to compare the variances of the two groups.

Results of Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I stated that there will be a significant difference between discrepancy scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. To measure discrepancy of interpersonal needs the Marital Attitude Evaluation (MATE) scale was utilized. Refer to Chapter III for a further description of the MATE.

Results of the MATE indicated a mean discrepancy score of 42.78 with a standard deviation of 22.61. The mean of the encounter

group was 37.52 with a standard deviation of 21.70. The mean of the therapy group was 51.53 with a standard deviation of 21.68. When analyzed by a t test, a significant difference was found between the encounter group and the therapy group as shown in Table 3. A univariate F test was computed to compare the variances of the two groups. An F ratio of 7.82 was computed with a significance of 0.006 (see Table 3 for data). The validity of these results are weakened by the size of the standard deviations for both the encounter and therapy groups. As shown in Table 3, there is a wide deviation from the mean for each group.

These findings reveal that couples in marital therapy had higher overall MATE scores than did couples in marriage encounter groups. Couples in marital therapy displayed higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs than did couples in marriage encounter groups.

Schutz (1960) claimed that marriages become dysfunctional because of discrepancies that arise involving the couples' need to give and receive control, affection, and inclusion. Schutz postulated that often an individual desires certain behavior from others and yet displays behavior that camouflages or distorts needs. The way an individual behaves towards others will influence the type of behavior received from others. The results of this research revealed that couples involved in marital therapy had higher overall MATE scores than the encounter group thus revealing a higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs. These findings support Schutz's theory.

The result of both the t test and the F ratio support Hypothesis I. This indicates that there is a significant difference

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, t Values, and F Ratios of the Variable MATE

Group	Statistics	
Encounter	Mean	= 37.52
	Standard deviation	= 21.70
Therapy	Mean	= 51.53
	Standard deviation	= 21.68
Encounter and therapy	F ratio	= 7.83
	Significant difference	= 0.006
	t value	= -2.80
	Significant difference	= 0.007

between discrepancy scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups.

Results of Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II stated that there is a significant difference in marital satisfaction between couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. Respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction with their marital relationship on a 1-5 scale--1 representing extreme dissatisfaction and 5 representing strong satisfaction. Results of the marital satisfaction questionnaires reveal a mean marital satisfaction score for the total sample of 12.35. The standard deviation was 3.03. The mean of the encounter

group was 13.42 with a standard deviation of 1.81. The mean of the therapy group was 10.57 with a standard deviation of 3.78. When analyzed by a t test, a t value of 3.88 with a .000 level of significance was obtained. A statistically significant difference was found between the encounter and the therapy group.

When analyzed by a univariate F test, there was a tendency for the therapy group to score with greater variability from the mean as shown in Table 4. The F ratio of 20.76 is at the .000 level of significance and is, therefore, statistically significant.

These findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in marital satisfaction between couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. These findings support previous research stating that couples engaged in marriage enrichment programs display a greater degree of perceived marital satisfaction. The findings also support research which states that couples engaged in marriage enrichment programs show greater marital adjustment than couples not involved in a marriage enrichment program (Boufford, 1976; Burns, 1972; Troost, 1976).

Results of Hypothesis III

Hypothesis III states that there is a significant difference between discrepancy scores and perception of marital satisfaction scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. A multivariate test of significance was computed to determine mutual correlation of the two questionnaires for couples involved in marital therapy and for couples engaged in marital

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, t Values, and F Ratios of the Variable Marital Satisfaction

Group	Statistics	
Encounter	Mean	= 13.42
	Standard deviation	= 1.81
Therapy	Mean	= 10.57
	Standard deviation	= 3.78
Encounter and therapy	F ratio	= 20.76
	Significant difference	= 0.000
	t value	= 3.88
	Significant difference	= 0.000

encounter groups (see Table 5). There is an inverse correlation between perceived marital satisfaction scores and MATE scores with a 0.000 level of significance. As perceived marital satisfaction scores go up, MATE scores go down. The validity of these results are also weakened by the size of the standard deviations. Table 5 reveals wide deviations from the mean for each group.

These findings support Hypothesis III by indicating that there is a significant difference between discrepancy scores and perception of marital satisfaction scores for both sample groups. The couples seeking marital therapy revealed lower perceived marital satisfaction scores and higher MATE scores than did couples engaged in a marriage encounter group.

Table 5

Mutual Correlation of MATE Scores and Marital Satisfaction Scores for the Encounter Group and the Therapy Group

Group	Mean	Standard deviation	n	95% confidence
Variable: MATE scores (discrepancy of needs)				
Encounter	37.52	21.70	50	31.35
Therapy	51.53	21.68	30	43.44
Variable: Marital satisfaction				
Encounter	13.42	1.80	50	12.90
Therapy	10.56	3.77	30	9.15

These findings support previous research which reveals that the interpersonal behaviors which occur between marital couples, in an attempt to satisfy unmet needs, significantly affect the couples' perception of marital satisfaction (Karlsson, 1963; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Locke, 1968; Narvan, 1967; Schutz, 1978).

Results of Other Significant Findings

T tests were computed to determine the level of significant differences between the encounter and therapy groups on all the 10 individual scales of the MATE. The two groups differed significantly on 7 of the 10 scales as shown in Table 6. Scores ranged from 0-9 on each scale. The greater the score, the greater the degree of agreement with the scale name, or the greater the degree of dissatisfaction.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and t Values of the Variable MATE On All Ten Scales

MATE scale	Statistics			
	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	Significant difference
Inclusion behavior, Part I:				
Encounter	3.70	2.53	-2.17	0.034*
Therapy	4.87	2.21		
Inclusion behavior, Part II:				
Encounter	4.50	2.69	-1.02	0.309
Therapy	5.10	2.44		
Inclusion feelings, Part I:				
Encounter	3.04	2.73	-2.66	0.010*
Therapy	4.70	2.69		
Inclusion feelings, Part II:				
Encounter	3.96	2.86	-2.43	0.018*
Therapy	5.57	2.87		
Control behavior, Part I:				
Encounter	3.14	2.25	-2.46	0.017*
Therapy	4.67	2.91		
Control behavior, Part II:				
Encounter	3.76	2.69	-2.12	0.039*
Therapy	5.17	2.98		

Table 6 (Continued)

MATE scale	Statistics			
	Mean	Standard deviation	*t* value	Significant difference
Control feelings, Part I:				
Encounter	3.06	2.23	-3.17	0.002*
Therapy	4.83	2.53		
Control feelings, Part II:				
Encounter	4.04	2.90	-1.80	0.076
Therapy	5.23	2.85		
Affection, Part I:				
Encounter	3.36	2.92	-3.47	0.001*
Therapy	5.57	2.65		
Affection, Part II:				
Encounter	4.96	2.96	-1.34	-.184*
Therapy	5.83	2.73		

*Indicates those *t* values which are shown to be significantly different.

The therapy group consistently scored higher on all sections of the MATE than the encounter group.

Scale 1 (Ib-I) refers to inclusion behavior. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I want you to spend more time with me and give me more attention." The mean of the encounter group is 3.70 with a standard deviation of 2.52. The mean of the therapy group is 4.87 with a standard deviation of 2.21. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.4 for wives and 4.5 for husbands. The encounter group scored well below the mean established by Schutz, while the therapy group scored well above this mean. The t value of -2.17 is significant at the .034 level. These findings reveal that the therapy group couples wanted more attention from their spouses than did the encounter group couples. One explanation for this finding may be that dysfunctional couples feel they are ignored or discounted by their spouses.

Scale 2 (Ib-II) refers to inclusion behavior. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I feel that you want me to spend more time with you and give you more attention." The mean of the encounter group is 4.50 with a standard deviation of 2.69. The mean of the therapy group is 5.10 with a standard deviation of 2.44. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.4 for wives and 4.5 for husbands. The mean of the encounter group agreed with Schutz's established scores, while the mean of the therapy group was well above Schutz's established means. The t value of -1.02 is not significant, although the therapy group still tended to score higher than the encounter group. These findings reveal that the encounter group

and therapy group did not differ significantly in perceiving that their spouses wanted more attention from them. This may indicate that both functional and dysfunctional couples share the same perceptions of what they believe their spouses want from them in regards to attention.

Scale 3 (If-I) refers to inclusion feelings. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I want you to be more interested in me and feel more strongly that I am a significant person." The mean of the encounter group is 3.40 with a standard deviation of 2.73. The mean of the therapy group is 4.70 with a standard deviation of 2.69. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.4 for wives and 4.8 for husbands. The encounter group scored well below Schutz's established means, while the therapy group scored within Schutz's established means. The t value is -2.66 and is significant at the .010 level. This finding supports the belief that dysfunctional couples are more dissatisfied than functional couples in the area of feeling accepted and approved of by their mate.

Scale 4 (If-II) refers to inclusion feelings. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I feel that you want me to be more interested in you and feel more strongly that you are a significant person." The mean of the encounter group is 3.96 with a standard deviation of 2.86. The mean of the therapy group is 5.57 with a standard deviation of 2.87. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.3 for wives and 4.8 for husbands. The encounter group scored well below these means, while the therapy group scored well above these means. The t value is -2.43 and is significant at the .018

level. These findings support the belief that dysfunctional couples may feel that their spouses want more approval and acceptance from them. The findings from scales 1 through 4 may indicate that dysfunctional couples seek therapy because each mate realizes their spouse's dissatisfaction in the area of inclusion.

Scale 5 (Cb-I) refers to control behavior. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I want you to allow me more freedom and allow me to think more for myself." The mean of the encounter group is 3.14 with a standard deviation of 2.26. The mean of the therapy is 4.67 with a standard deviation of 2.92. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.2 for wives, and a mean of 4.4 for husbands. The mean of the encounter group was below these means, while the mean of the therapy group was above these established means. The t value of -2.46 is significant at the .017 level.

Scale 6 (Cb-II) refers to control behavior. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I feel that you want me to allow you more freedom and allow you to think more for yourself." The mean of the encounter group is 3.76 with a standard deviation of 2.69. The mean of the therapy group is 5.17 with a standard deviation of 2.98. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.4 for wives and a mean of 4.5 for husbands. The encounter group was well below these established means, while the therapy group was well above these means. The t value of -2.12 is significant at the .039 level. These findings indicate that dysfunctional couples may be dissatisfied in the area of giving and receiving control. They not only want more control for themselves, but they feel that their

spouses also want more control and freedom.

Scale 7 (Cf-I) refers to control feelings. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I want you to have more respect for my ability to think and to do things well." The mean of the encounter group is 3.06 with a standard deviation of 2.23. The mean of the therapy group is 4.83 with a standard deviation of 2.53. Schutz (1978) established a mean of 4.4 for wives and 4.4 for husbands. The mean of the encounter group is below Schutz's established means, while the mean of the therapy group is above Schutz's means. The t value of -3.17 is significant at the .002 level.

Scale 8 (Cf-II) refers to control feelings. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I feel that you want me to have more respect for your ability to think and to do things well." The mean of the encounter group is 4.04 with a standard deviation of 2.90. The mean of the therapy group is 5.23 with a standard deviation of 2.85. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.5 for wives and a mean of 5.4 for husbands. The encounter group scored below Schutz's means, while the therapy group scored within Schutz's means. The t value of -1.8 is not significant, but is nearing significance, at the .076 level. The therapy group tended to score higher than the encounter group. The findings indicate that dysfunctional couples may be dissatisfied in the area of control feelings. These couples demonstrate the desire to be shown more respect for their ability to think and perform. They also perceive that their mates want more respect in the same areas from them. The findings revealed from

therapy because they are dissatisfied with the issue of control.

Scale 9 (A-I) refers to affection. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978), as "I want you to show and feel more love and affection for me." The mean of the encounter group is 3.36 with a standard deviation of 2.92. The mean of the therapy group is 5.57 with a standard deviation of 2.65. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.5 for wives and a mean of 4.1 for husbands. The encounter group scored well below these means, while the therapy group scored well above these means. The t value of -3.47 is significant at the .001 level.

Scale 10 (A-II) refers to affection. The scale name is defined by Schutz (1978) as, "I feel that you want me to show and feel more love and affection for you." The mean of the encounter group is 4.96 with a standard deviation of 2.96. The mean of the therapy group is 5.83 with a standard deviation of 2.73. Schutz (1978), in his research, established a mean of 4.6 for wives and a mean of 4.6 for husbands. Both the encounter group and the therapy group scored above Schutz's established means. The t value of -1.34 was not significant at the .184 level, although the therapy group did tend to score slightly higher than the encounter group. In summary, the results from scales 9 and 10 reveal that dysfunctional couples are more dissatisfied in the areas of giving and receiving affection than functional couples. Both functional and dysfunctional couples had fairly high scores in perceiving that their mates wanted more love and affection. This finding supports previous research which reveals that demonstrations of love and affection are the number one way that

one can show that one cares (Argyle & Furnham, 1983). This may indicate that even functional couples project that they are not giving enough in this area.

Analysis of variance was computed comparing one mate's part I (respondent's desires from their mate) with the other mate's part II (how respondent perceives their mate's dissatisfaction). Comparisons were then made between the two groups (see Table 7 for significant results). As shown in Table 7, there was a significant difference for both comparisons. It is also demonstrated in Table 7 that the standard deviations reveal a wide variation from all the mean scores. The fact that all the mean scores in Table 7 vary greatly weakens the validity of these findings. Female part I versus male part II revealed an $\underline{F}$ value of 5.161 which is significant at the 0.026 level. Female part II versus male part I revealed an $\underline{F}$ value of 8.655 which is significant at the 0.004 level. Although couples in the encounter group were shown to have lower total MATE scores, they had greater discrepancy when correlating part I and part II. The couples in the marital therapy group had less discrepancy when correlating their part I and part II scores. Therefore, they were able to more accurately perceive their partner's needs than were couples in the encounter group. This may indicate that even though dysfunctional couples are not getting their needs met in the areas of inclusion, control, and affection, both spouses are aware of this fact which results in a lower discrepancy of interpersonal needs. Dysfunctional couples may seek marital therapy because both spouses recognize their areas of dissatisfaction. This may explain why they have less discrepancy on MATE

Table 7

Comparisons of One Spouse's Part I MATE Scores with the Other Spouse's Part II MATE Scores--Means, Standard Deviations, *t* Values, and *F* Ratios

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
	Encounter	
Female, Part I	16.44	10.45
Male, Part II	23.44	13.36
	Therapy	
Female, Part I	24.00	10.23
Male, Part II	28.20	12.27
t value = -2.27 Significant difference = 0.026		
F ratio = 5.16 Significant difference = 0.026		
	Encounter	
Female, Part II	19.00	10.95
Male, Part I	16.16	11.36
	Therapy	
Female, Part II	25.60	12.30
Male, Part I	25.26	12.13
t value = -2.94 Significant difference = 0.004		
F ratio = 8.66 Significant difference = 0.004		

scores than functional couples. Because they agree on their areas of dissatisfaction, they reveal a smaller discrepancy of interpersonal needs than functional couples. Or put another way, functional couples reveal a greater discrepancy of interpersonal needs of which they are unaware. This supports findings by Davidson et al. (1983) who found that husbands' and wives' perceptions concerning the balance of affective interpersonal exchange to be most strongly related to marital adjustment. They found that when spouses are involved in inequitable relationships concerning interpersonal patterns, one way to compensate is to overestimate or underestimate the other spouse's contribution. Partners who perceive their interpersonal patterns as equal indicated better adjustment in their marriage.

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to analyze significant differences between perceived marital satisfaction scores and MATE scores and the demographic data obtained from the respondents.

Computation of correlation coefficients revealed that age was positively correlated with marital satisfaction with a p value of .012. As the age of the couple increased, so did their perception of marital satisfaction. Age was negatively correlated with MATE scores, with a p value of .000. As the age of the couple decreased, their MATE scores increased and they revealed a greater discrepancy of interpersonal needs. The mean age for the encounter group was 33 years. The mean age for the therapy group was 29 years. The t value of 2.19 is significant at the .032 level. This reveals a significant difference between the ages of the two groups as illustrated in Table 1.

Computation of correlation coefficients revealed that subject's education level was positively correlated with marital satisfaction with a p value of .048. As education level goes up, perceived marital satisfaction scores increased. This correlation is not as significant as the correlation with age. The mean education level of the respondents from the groups was 14.9 years. The encounter group had a mean education level of 14.7 years and the therapy group had a mean of 15 years. This was not significant. Computation of correlation coefficients revealed that education level was not significantly correlated with MATE scores. This may indicate that education level does not affect the interpersonal behavior of married couples.

Income, number of years married, and number of children did not reveal significant correlations with marital satisfaction. The income variable came close to reaching a significant value. The p values were, respectively, .061, .160, and .095. These findings support research by Cutright (1971) who found disagreement on the strength of income in predicting marital success. Burgess and Cottrell (1939) found a moderate relationship between income and marital satisfaction. Income was negatively correlated with MATE scores ($p = .009$). As income increased, MATE scores decreased. This indicates that couples with higher incomes display less discrepancy of interpersonal needs, which may result in a more functional marriage. The results of this research support research by Levinger (1965), who found a clear inverse correlation between income and divorce status. Levinger also found an even greater correlation between income and

separated status when he studied the entire U.S. population by the census. Levinger (1965), Locke (1968), and O'Brien (1971) have all found that it may be that the perception of income rather than income itself is an important predictor of relationship satisfaction. As illustrated in Table 1, the encounter group fell into a higher income bracket than the therapy couples but the difference was slight.

Number of years married was negatively correlated with MATE scores. As the number of years married increased, the MATE scores decreased. This may indicate that the greater the number of years a couple is married, the less discrepancy of interpersonal needs they will display. Since a high discrepancy of interpersonal needs had been shown to be characteristic of dysfunctional marriages, these findings may indicate that couples who have been married a long time are more functional. The results of this research support this possibility. The encounter group revealed a mean number of years married as 9.5 ranging from 3 months to 36 years. The counseling group revealed a mean number of years married as 6.4 ranging from 6 months to 22 years. The t value of 2.05 is significant at the .044 level.

Number of children was negatively correlated with MATE scores (p = .006). As the number of children increased, the MATE scores decreased. This may indicate that the greater the number of children in the marriage, the less the discrepancy of interpersonal needs between the spouses. Miller (1976) found the number of children had a significant negative effect on interaction. The average number of children for the therapy group was 1.4, ranging from 0 to 5. The average number of children for the encounter group was 3.1, ranging

from 0 to 6. The t value of 2.41 is significant at the .019 level. This supports research by Cherlin (1977) who noted that when no children were present, the probabilities of marital dissolution were twice as great as when at least one child less than 6 years old was in the household. This held true regardless of the number of siblings. If children were present, but all were at least 6 years old, the risk of marital dissolution was the same as if children were absent. Cherlin concluded that the demands of child care acted to reduce the risk of marital disruption. This research did not reveal the ages of the children. Therefore, it is difficult to predict whether or not the effect the number of children made on the sample was due to their ages. This research does not support previous research which has found that children negatively affect marital satisfaction and the effectiveness of interpersonal behavior in marital couples.

Several other researchers report that childless wives report higher levels of marital satisfaction (Feldman, 1971; Houseknecht, 1979; Ryder, 1973). Anderson, Russell, and Schumm (1983) found that when children are present in the home, they compete for the amount of time spouses are able to share with each other in communication. This is consistent with Ryder's (1973) findings that women who have children are more likely than childless women to report that their husbands are not paying enough attention to them. Houseknecht (1979) also found that women with children are less likely than women who are childless by choice to engage in outside activities with their spouses. They are also less likely to exchange stimulating ideas with their partner or calmly discuss an issue with them.

Other research from the 1970s confirms that children tend to detract rather than to contribute to the marital quality of their parents. It has been reported that the birth of a child has a negative impact upon most marriages, especially for the wives (Feldman & Feldman, 1975; Rollins & Galligan, 1978).

A multiple regression was computed to examine the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables age, income, level of education, number of years married, and number of children. Table 8 presents the Pearson r, r^2, adjusted r^2 , and Beta weights from the multiple regression analysis of the independent variable age using marital satisfaction as the dependent variable. As illustrated in Table 8, 6% of the variance of the dependent variable was attributed to age. This was the only independent variable which revealed a significant effect on marital satisfaction for the total sample (p = .024). Level of education was second with a t value of .084. This is not significant. The Beta weights indicate which of the independent variables contribute most to the variance of the dependent variable. The Beta weight indicates the strength and direction of the relationship. Thus, as age increased, the more likely marital satisfaction was to increase. Conversely as age decreased, the more likely marital satisfaction was to decrease.

Table 9 presents the Pearson r, r^2, adjusted r^2, and Beta weights from the multiple regression analysis of the independent variables age and income using MATE scores as the dependent variable. Both age and income were shown to significantly affect the variance of MATE scores with t values of .005 and .017, respectively. As

Table 8

Regression Analysis of the Independent Variable, Age, and the Dependent Variable, Marital Satisfaction

Independent variable	Multiple r^2	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Beta weight
Age	.252	.063	.514	.252

t = .024

Table 9

Regression Analysis of the Independent Variables, Age and Income, and the Dependent Variable, MATE Scores

Independent variable	Multiple r^2	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Beta weight
Age	.381	.145	.134	-.371
Income	.455	.207	.187	-.249

illustrated in Table 9, 21% of the variance of the dependent variable was attributed to age and income. The Beta weights demonstrate that age contributed most to the variance. As age increased, MATE scores were likely to decrease. As age decreased, MATE scores were likely to increase. Income contributed to 6% of the total 21% of the variance. As income increased, MATE scores were likely to decrease. Conversely as income decreased, MATE scores were likely to increase.

A multiple regression was next computed on the sample groups individually to see if the independent variables affected the dependent variables in the same way. When the encounter group was examined by multiple regression, using marital satisfaction as the dependent variable, it was revealed that none of the independent variables showed a significant effect. However, when MATE scores were computed as the dependent variable for the encounter group, both age and income were shown to significantly effect the variance of MATE scores with $\underline{t}$ values of .023 and .018, respectively. Table 10 illustrates that each independent variable (age and income) contributed 11% and 10% to the variance of the dependent variable. As demonstrated by the Beta weights, age contributed most to the variance. As age decreased, MATE scores were likely to increase. Income contributed slightly less to the variance. As income increased, MATE scores were likely to decrease. Conversely as income decreased, MATE scores were likely to increase.

A multiple regression was next computed to examine the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables for the therapy group. Table 11 presents the results of the multiple

Table 10

Regression Analysis of the Independent Variables, Age and Income, and the Dependent Variable, MATE Scores for the Encounter Group

Independent variable	Multiple r^2	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Beta weight
Age	.326	.107	.088	-.427
Income	.456	.208	.174	-.334

Table 11

Regression Analysis of the Independent Variable, Education, and the Dependent Variable, MATE Scores for the Therapy Group

Independent variable	Multiple r^2	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Beta weight
Age	.472	.222	.195	-.472

regression of the independent variable education level using marital satisfaction as the dependent variable was attributed to education level. This was the only independent variable which revealed a significant effect on marital satisfaction (t = .009). The Beta weight demonstrates that education contributed most to the variance of marital satisfaction. As education level increased, marital satisfaction scores were likely to increase. As education level decreased, marital satisfaction scores were likely to decrease.

Table 12 presents the results of the multiple regression of the independent variable age using MATE scores as the dependent variable. It is shown that 14% of the variance of the dependent variable was attributed to age. This was the only independent variable which revealed a significant effect on MATE scores with a t value of .041. As age increased, MATE scores were likely to decrease. Conversely, as age decreased, MATE scores were likely to increase in the counseling group.

In summary, the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that age significantly affects the variance of both marital satisfaction and MATE scores for the total sample. This may indicate that older couples are better at recognizing each other's needs which may result in a more satisfying relationship. Income was shown to significantly affect the variance of MATE scores for the total sample but not marital satisfaction. This may indicate that couples with a higher income are able to spend more quality time together interacting, which results in a lesser discrepancy of interpersonal needs. These research findings indicate that the effects of income do not affect

Table 12

Regression Analysis of the Independent Variable, Age, and the Dependent Variable, MATE Scores, for the Therapy Group

Independent variable	Multiple r^2	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Beta weight
Age	.376	.141	.111	-.376

perceived marital satisfaction.

When a multiple regression was computed to analyze the encounter group, it revealed that none of the independent variables significantly affected marital satisfaction. This may indicate that functional marriages are most affected by positive interpersonal patterns, rather than variables, such as age, income, education level, number of children, or number of years married. The same independent variables (age and income) were significant in affecting the MATE scores for the encounter group as for the entire sample.

When a multiple regression was computed to analyze the therapy group, it revealed that education level alone was significant in affecting the variance of marital satisfaction. This may indicate that highly educated individuals seek out similarly educated partners and because of this symmetry of education level, they are better able to identify problems in the marriage. The independent variable, age, was shown to be the only independent variable which revealed a significant effect on MATE scores for the therapy group.

The results of the multiple regression analysis added additional support to Hypotheses I and II. It was again shown that there will be significant differences between discrepancy scores for couples in marital therapy and couples engaged in marriage encounter groups. There were also significant differences between marital satisfaction scores for couples in marital therapy and couples engaged in marriage encounter groups.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Psychiatric nurse specialists functioning as family therapists are often involved in treating dysfunctional married couples. In order to insure high quality nursing care, it is important to develop a scientifically based framework from which to evaluate and assess clients. A better understanding of dysfunctional interpersonal patterns in married couples would aid the psychiatric nurse specialist in developing effective treatment goals for therapy. All nurses would benefit from research which expands the knowledge of interpersonal relations. This is because the nursing process involves a holistic approach when working with patients.

This study was designed to determine whether statistically significant differences exist in married couples on the dimensions of marital satisfaction and discrepancy of interpersonal needs between functional and dysfunctional couples. Schutz's (1960) interpersonal theory provided the framework for this study. Schutz proposes that all individuals have three basic needs: inclusion, control, and affection, and that these needs determine behavior and personality characteristics. Schutz claims that marriages become dysfunctional because of discrepancies that arise involving the couple's need to give and receive control, inclusion, and affection. Three hypotheses

were formulated which compared differences in marital satisfaction and differences of interpersonal needs between functional and dysfunctional couples.

Functional couples were identified as those engaged in marriage encounter groups. The literature reveals that encounter groups focus on marriage enrichment by enhancing the couple's strengths and communication skills (Guerney, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1975). Dysfunctional couples are identified as those engaged in marital therapy. The literature reveals that couples engaged in marital therapy present with a complaint of marital dysfunction which is often linked to ineffective interpersonal communication (Mace & Mace, 1975; Harris, 1967; Schutz, 1960).

The tool used to measure discrepancy of interpersonal needs was the Marital Attitude Evaluation Scale (MATE) devised by Schutz (1978). It is designed to measure compatability of the marital pair by assessing both the desired behavior from the spouse and the perceived dissatisfaction of the spouse with the respondent's behavior. A low score indicates a low discrepancy of interpersonal needs; a high score indicates a high discrepancy of interpersonal needs.

Marital satisfaction was assessed by a Likert scale which measured, in three different questions, how satisfied each spouse was with the marital relationship on a scale of 1 to 5. A high score indicated positive satisfaction, whereas a low score indicated dissatisfaction.

Hypothesis I stated that there will be a significant difference between discrepancy scores for couples seeking marital therapy and

couples engaged in encounter groups. This hypothesis was supported statistically at the .007 level of significance. The therapy group scored higher on MATE scores than did the encounter group. This is to say that the difference in needs expressed and needs met was greater for the therapy group.

Hypothesis II stated that there will be a significant difference between marital satisfaction scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. This hypothesis was supported statistically at the 0.000 level of significance. The encounter group couples scored higher on perceived marital satisfaction than did the therapy couples. This indicates that functional couples may perceive their relationships as more satisfying than dysfunctional couples.

Hypothesis III stated that there will be a significant difference between discrepancy scores and marital satisfaction scores for couples seeking marital therapy and couples engaged in encounter groups. A multivariate test of significance revealed an inverse correlation between marital satisfaction scores and MATE scores at the 0.000 level of significance. As perceived marital satisfaction scores go up, MATE scores go down. The couples seeking marital therapy revealed lower marital satisfaction scores and higher MATE scores than did couples engaged in a marriage encounter group.

t tests were computed to determine the level of significant differences between the encounter and therapy groups on all 10 individual scales of the MATE. The two groups differed significantly on 7 of the 10 scales. The therapy group consistently scored higher on

all sections of the MATE than the encounter group.

Analysis of variance was computed comparing one mate's part I (respondent's desires from their mate) with the other mate's part II (how respondent perceives their mate's dissatisfaction). Comparisons were then made between the groups. Although couples in the encounter group were shown to have lower total MATE scores, they had greater discrepancy when correlating part I and part II. The couples in the marital therapy group had less discrepancy when correlating their part I and part II scores. This may indicate that dysfunctional couples are more aware of their dissatisfactions. This would account for the lower discrepancy score between needs and the higher dissatisfaction score. Functional couples, on the other hand, may be unaware of any discrepancies because they perceive their relationship as satisfactory.

Correlation coefficients were computed to analyze significant differences between perceived marital satisfaction scores and MATE scores and the demographic data obtained from the respondents. It revealed that age (p = .012) and education level (p = .048) were positively correlated with marital satisfaction. Income, number of children, and number of years married were negatively correlated with MATE scores. A multiple regression analysis further revealed that age had the strongest effect on marital satisfaction for the encounter group, but education was shown to have the strongest effect on marital satisfaction for the therapy group.

Age and income were shown to be the most significant variables affecting MATE scores for both the total sample and for the encounter

group. Age was the only variable to show a significant effect on MATE scores in the therapy group.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research study had many limitations which makes it difficult to generalize the results beyond the particular population studied. The sample was not representative since it was chosen for convenience. The sample was small, with 25 couples in the encounter group and 15 couples in the therapy group. Additional studies need to be done using larger more representative samples.

To facilitate collection of data, therapists at the university counseling center were asked to choose couples who met the criteria for this study. Couples qualified if their chief complaint for seeking marriage therapy involved some aspect of marriage dysfunction and if they had been in therapy less than 4 weeks.

Marriage encounter couples were chosen from couples attending a local Salt Lake City marriage encounter program. The couples were not limited to a particular religion. However, the couples were not screened prior to their participation in the study for factors including the length of time they had been involved in a marriage encounter program. The only stipulation was that each couple must have participated in at least one marriage encounter experience and that the couple had not previously or were not currently receiving marital therapy. Thus, the selection of participants for the sample groups was not critically controlled. It was unclear if the length of time a couple was involved in either therapy or the encounter program

affected their perception of marital satisfaction and their MATE scores.

The researchers attempted to control for demographic variables as much as possible. Ideally the only difference between the two groups would be whether or not they were functional or dysfunctional in their marital relationship. The couples in each group were similar in that a specific religious preference was not predominant. All of the couples in both samples had completed high school and 50% of each group had completed between 1 and 4 years of college. Income levels turned out to be similar in each sample group, although the encounter group couples ranked slightly higher in the over $25,000 a year bracket and slightly lower in the under $10,000 a year bracket. This is to say that the encounter group appeared to be in a higher income level than the therapy group, but the differences were slight. It is unclear whether or not this may have biased the results. The same is true for number of years married. The encounter group had an average of 9.2 years married and the therapy group had an average of 6.4 years married. Again, this may have biased the research results. Coding of occupational status was not included in this research. Thus, it is unclear whether or not occupational status may have affected the research results.

An additional limitation is that the Marital Attitude Evaluation scale (MATE) has not been used extensively in previous research. No documentation was found indicating that the MATE has been used to compare interpersonal behavior patterns between functional and dysfunctional couples. An extensive literature search revealed no

evidence that the MATE has been utilized in any research other than what was noted in this study. Additional research is needed in this area using this tool in order for the results to be generalized beyond the sample population.

This study supported evidence that the MATE is a useful clinical tool. It is beneficial in identifying areas of discrepancies between couples. The MATE is reported to be a useful tool to help structure initial therapy sessions, by specifying problem areas in a relationship that require therapeutic attention. As a research tool, the MATE is weak. It has been used rarely in research, and there is very little documentation in the literature as to its effectiveness. The MATE was shown to be a weak tool for this study, as demonstrated by the wide standard deviations. The fact that all scores deviated so greatly from the mean scores, weakened the validity of the study.

The literature suggests that couples engaged in marriage enrichment programs perceive their marital satisfaction as greater than couples not engaged in an enrichment program (Burns, 1972; Hof & Miller, 1981; Mace & Mace, 1975; Otto, 1976). More studies need to be done, with follow-up measures, before a conclusion can be reached that couples engaged in marriage enrichment programs are more functional than couples in marital therapy.

Implications for Nursing

Nurses are in an excellent position to assess and impact on the interpersonal behavior patterns of individuals and families. Nurses deal with people from all aspects of life and in many different settings. It is important for nurses to establish relevant research

data that will aid in the assessment and treatment of clients.

Nurses are often asked to assist families in crisis. Oftentimes, what appears at first to be either an individual or family-related problem, turns out to be a dysfunctional interpersonal pattern between spouses. Scientific data on common characteristics among dysfunctional couples would benefit nurses in assessing dysfunctional couples and in providing a framework from which treatment and goals can be developed.

There continues to be a need for sound diagnostic tools for assessing dysfunctional couples. Nurses can also make valuable contributions to the psychosocial community by conducting research which evaluates the quality of existing tools.

This study has stimulated additional research questions which are important to nursing. This study revealed that functional couples display a higher discrepancy of interpersonal needs than dysfunctional couples. Further research in the area of how perceptions affect the quality of marital relationships would be useful to nursing.

Using the MATE for family and marital therapy can be useful to psychiatric nurse clinicians in helping to structure the first few therapy sessions. This helps to give the clients hope as well as letting them know that the therapist is knowledgeable and comfortable with the process.

For many years nursing has struggled to establish its credibility as a profession. Research, which furthers the knowledge base of nursing, is important in establishing this credibility. This study has added to the scientifically based framework of nursing.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE PACKET

Consent Form

Attached you will find two questionnaires and a demographic data sheet. The information obtained from these data will be used in a study to compare discrepancy of interpersonal needs and also the current perception of marital satisfaction among married couples. Please complete the demographic data sheet and both questionnaires and return them to the researcher.

YOUR COMPLETION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET AND THE QUESTIONNAIRES IS YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY AND ALSO FOR THE RESEARCHERS TO USE THIS INFORMATION IN THE STUDY RESULTS.

You are not required to sign your name to any of these data. Complete anonymity is assured to each participant in this study. Each individual participant will be assigned a code number and all information will be processed by codes. Information will be reported by aggregate groups and not individually. All participants will be given the opportunity to know the results of this study.

If you have further questions concerning your participation in the study, please contact either Shoni Welsh at ___-____ or Marge Stempky at ___-____.

Demographic Data

Male: _____ Female: _____

Age: _____

Occupation: _____

Annual income (consider both yourself and spouse):

$ 5-10,000
$11-14,000
$15-25,000
$25,000 or more

How many years of formal education have you completed (circle one)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 More

I participate in church activities:

_____ Once a month
_____ Once a week
_____ Twice a month
_____ Twice a week
_____ 3 times a month
_____ More
Denomination: _____

Number of years or months in present marriage: _____

Number of children: _____

Ages of children: _____

Have you previously participated in marriage counseling in your present marriage:

_____ Yes
_____ No

How Much Do You Agree?

I am very satisfied with my marriage.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly agree

I feel very content in my marriage.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly agree

I feel very unsatisfied with my marriage.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree		Agree	Strongly agree

Marital Attitude Evaluation

Write a number from 1 to 6 in the space next to each item. The numbers mean: 1 = definitely not true, 2 = not true, 3 = tends to be not true, 4 = tends to be true, 5 = true, and 6 = especially true.

PART I: I WANT YOU TO . . .

_____ 1. Allow me more freedom.
_____ 2. Display more affection to me.
_____ 3. Have more respect for my judgment.
_____ 4. Feel more attached to me.
_____ 5. Treat me in a warmer and friendlier manner.
_____ 6. Be more interested in my activities.
_____ 7. Take me out more.
_____ 8. Feel more confident about my ability to think critically.
_____ 9. Allow me to make more decisions.
_____ 10. Display more love for me.
_____ 11. Feel more strongly that I am a significant aspect of your life.
_____ 12. Have more respect for my ability to think for myself.
_____ 13. Share more of your recreational time with me.
_____ 14. Tell me what to do less often.
_____ 15. Be more interested in me.
_____ 16. Be warmer and closer in your behavior towards me.
_____ 17. Feel more strongly that I am an important member of your group.
_____ 18. Have more confidence in my ability to learn things.
_____ 19. Spend more time with me.
_____ 20. Give me more freedom to choose my own friends.
_____ 21. Be more interested in the things I am interested in.
_____ 22. Spend more time alone with me.
_____ 23. Put fewer limits on what I can do.
_____ 24. Give me more praise for my accomplishments.
_____ 25. Be more confident that I will succeed in life.
_____ 26. Give me more attention.
_____ 27. Feel more love for me.
_____ 28. Be more interested in being at home with me.
_____ 29. Have more confidence in my ability to take care of myself.
_____ 30. Allow me to think more for myself.
_____ 31. Feel closer to me as a person.
_____ 32. Feel more strongly that I am a significant person.
_____ 33. Have more respect for my ability to solve problems.
_____ 34. Take me more on trips.
_____ 35. Criticize me less for my conduct and manners.
_____ 36. Feel more strongly that I am an important person.
_____ 37. Feel more confident about my ability to succeed at difficult tasks.
_____ 38. Spend more of your free time with me.

_____ 39. Supervise my activities less.
_____ 40. Feel more affection for me.
_____ 41. Be more confident that I can be trusted with responsibilities.
_____ 42. Spend more time showing me how to do things.
_____ 43. Insist less on respect for me.
_____ 44. Feel more warmth for me.
_____ 45. Engage more in activities with me.

PARt II: YOU WANT ME TO . . .

_____ 1. Allow you more freedom.
_____ 2. Display more affection for you.
_____ 3. Have more respect for your judgment.
_____ 4. Feel more attached to you.
_____ 5. Treat you in a warmer and friendlier manner.
_____ 6. Be more interested in your activities.
_____ 7. Take you out more.
_____ 8. Feel more confident about your ability to think critically.
_____ 9. Allow you to make more decisions.
_____ 10. Display more love for you.
_____ 11. Feel more strongly that you are a significant aspect of my life.
_____ 12. Have more respect for your ability to think for yourself.
_____ 13. Share more of my recreational time with you.
_____ 14. Tell you what to do less often.
_____ 15. Be more interested in you.
_____ 16. Be warmer and closer in my behavior toward you.
_____ 17. Feel more strongly that you are an important member of my group.
_____ 18. Have more confidence in your ability to learn things.
_____ 19. Spend more time with you.
_____ 20. Give you more freedom to choose your own friends.
_____ 21. Be more interested in the things you are interested in.
_____ 22. Spend more time alone with you.
_____ 23. Put fewer limits on what you can do.
_____ 24. Give you more praise for your accomplishments.
_____ 25. Be more confident that you will succeed in life.
_____ 26. Give you more attention.
_____ 27. Feel more love for you.
_____ 28. Be more interested in being at home with you.
_____ 29. Have more confidence in your ability to take care of yourself.
_____ 30. Allow you to think more for yourself.
_____ 31. Feel closer to you as a person.
_____ 32. Feel more strongly that you are a significant person.
_____ 33. Have more respect for your ability to solve problems.
_____ 34. Take you more on trips.
_____ 35. Criticize you less for your conduct and manners.

_____ 36. Feel more strongly that you are an important person.
_____ 37. Feel more confident about your ability to succeed at difficult tasks.
_____ 38. Spend more of my free time with you.
_____ 39. Supervise your activities less.
_____ 40. Feel more affection for you.
_____ 41. Be more confident that you can be trusted with responsibilities.
_____ 42. Spend more time showing you how to do things.
_____ 43. Insist less on respect from you.
_____ 44. Feel more warmth for you.
_____ 45. Engage more in activities with you.

Note. From FIRO awareness scales manual by W. C. Schutz, 1978, Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

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